

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BENCHMARK COMMITTEE OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
February 21, 2002**

The meeting of the Benchmark Committee of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 11:00 a.m., on February 21, 2002, in the Commission Board Room at the Transportation Building, Olympia, Washington.

Committee members present were: Aubrey Davis, Connie Niva, A. Michèle Maher, and Chris Marr.

Secretary MacDonald reviewed with the Committee a document describing the progress made by the Department in establishing performance measures reporting under the Measures, Markers and Mileposts Report (Gray Notebook), compared to the expectations set forth in ESHB 2304, passed during the 2002 legislative session. He stated that at the March meeting, the Department would present draft benchmarks for administration.

Secretary MacDonald then reviewed with the Committee a document providing a progress report on the efforts of the Department to measure congestion and incident response.

Mark Hallenbeck, TRAC Director, discussed with the Committee performance measures for urban freeway congestion and for incident management and response. The Department is working on developing information on free flow travel time by segments, as well as travel time possible under maximum flow conditions. The goal being considered is that recurring travel time during peak periods would approach maximum volume travel time. Also, the Department would strive to have travel times on incident days approach non-incident travel times, and non-peak period incident delays would be minimized. The Department can measure the statistics necessary for tracking the above goals already, with minor changes in the current analytical software. Mr. Hallenbeck suggested that the information could be made available on the Department's web site for the ten commute segments most readily recognized.

Toby Rickman discussed with the Committee the importance of reliability indicators for the freeways, and the possibility of using a "buffer index" measure. He pointed out that there is no standard measure widely used to track system reliability, and the national debate on the buffer index is still on going.

Mr. Rickman indicated that the Northwest Region would proceed to work on the reporting travel time information. For the March meeting of the Committee, the Department will bring a final proposed set of congestion benchmarks and a schedule for implementing the benchmarks.

Daniela Bremmer stated that the next steps would be to work on the administration measure and finalize the congestion relief measure, and then proceed to implement the remainder of the benchmarks mentioned in ESHB 2304.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. on February 21, 2002.